

Spring 2021

## HIST 377-002: Cities in History

Kyle Riismandel

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History 377.002 – CITIES IN HISTORY:  
THE AMERICAN CITY THE 20<sup>TH</sup> AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURIES  
Spring 2021

Professor: Dr. Kyle Riismandel

Email: [kriis@njit.edu](mailto:kriis@njit.edu)

Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 230-350PM

Classroom: WebEx

Office Hours: Google Meet – <https://meet.google.com/yxc-bsid-mjx>

- Book appointments using: [riismandel.youcanbook.me](https://riismandel.youcanbook.me)
- Monday 12PM-2PM
- Wednesday 12PM-2PM
- Thursday 11AM-1230PM
- If you cannot meet during these times, please email me for an appointment.

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will study how urban space was produced and how those who moved within cities made sense of it and themselves. Specifically, we will seek to understand how struggles over urban spaces and narratives and representations contributed to the understandings of the limits and possibilities of urban space including their shaping of notions of citizenship, belonging, race, class, gender, and sexuality.

To do so, we will examine primary sources ranging from legal cases, government reports, architectural plans, and newspaper stories to television, movies, and music. In addition, we will make use of leading scholarship on law, culture, and design to give us context for interpreting primary sources and to help make sense of key historical events, people, and ideas in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century US urban history.

**Course Goals:**

1. Students will learn and practice the skills necessary to analyze, discuss, and write about primary and secondary sources related to the study of American cities
2. Students will understand and apply the concept of the 'production' of urban space through analysis of primary and secondary sources
3. Students will identify and explain the significance of key events, terms, and people related to the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century urban history

**Course Texts**

All course materials are available via [canvas.njit.edu](https://canvas.njit.edu).

**Course Grade:**

The course grade will be calculated as follows:

- Class participation 18%
- Reading Quizzes – 5 x 3% 15%
- Final Exam 27%
- Primary Source Short Paper – 2 x 14% = 28%

- Recap Paper and Presentation 12%

**Failure to complete all of the above assignments will result in an automatic F for the course.**

### Assignments:

#### Class participation

Students are expected to participate actively in all class discussions and activities, to be respectful to the instructor and their fellow classmates, to arrive to class on time, and to stay focused on what is happening in our classroom not on chatting or using digital devices. Further, participation will be assessed not just on quantity but also on quality. Quality participation demonstrates knowledge of the issues at hand, completion of that week's assignments, and a willingness to engage in critical assessment of course texts and lectures. The participation grade may also include pop quizzes and short writing assignments done in class.

I encourage students to check in with me over the course of the semester regarding their class participation performance. As a reminder, office hours are for meeting with students. Further, do not wait to contact me if you are falling behind, having trouble understanding course content, or want to know more about what we are studying. I am here to help!

#### Short Primary Source Papers

This assignment asks you to complete a 400-600 word analysis of a primary source related to that particular week's theme. You must choose a source from the syllabus or supplemental source list provided. You may choose a different source but must get permission from the instructor to use it.

Though a short paper, you will want to formulate an argument as to what your source(s) help us understand about the broader theme of U.S. urban history under consideration that week. You must complete one paper before Week 9 and one from Week 9 – Week 15.

#### Reading Quizzes – 3% x 5

Five times during the semester, you will complete a multiple-choice reading quiz on Canvas designed to test reading comprehension of that day's assignment.

#### Recap Paper

We begin each class with a short discussion of the big takeaways from our last session. This assignment asks you to lead that recap discussion as well as submit a short (300-600) written recap.

Your recap should include the key analytical takeaways from a lecture and/or discussion. That means, you should articulate what we learned or now understand about that week's theme or topic.

The goals of this assignment are to:

- Articulate to yourself and your classmates what we learned or understood about the previous class's theme or topic

- Prepare for questions on the final exam that will rely on your knowledge of these larger analytical points
- Practice historical writing including synthetic description and analysis

### Exam

There will be one exam. It is a take-home essay exam. This exam will test your knowledge of key terms, events, policies, and debates in urban history and will ask you to make broader connections across eras, places, and peoples in United States urban history.

### Course Policies

#### Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all course meetings on time unless receiving prior authorization. Missing class will not only adversely affect your class participation grade, but there will be screenings in class that will only be offered during that class period so do your best to attend. If you miss class to attend an NJIT sponsored event, to observe a religious holiday, or due to a documented illness, those absences will be excused. For these absences to count as excused, you must receive permission from the instructor in advance or provide a doctor's note in the case of sickness.

#### Classroom Conduct:

In this course, we welcome intellectual inquiry and thoughtful discussion of difficult questions but hate speech and disrespectful comments will not be tolerated. We must come to class with an open mind, a willingness to learn, and fundamental respect for the humanity of each person in the room and the historical actors we discuss.

#### Office hours/student appointments:

My office hours will be:

- Monday 12PM-2PM
- Wednesday 12PM-2PM
- Thursday 11AM-1230PM
- If you cannot make an appointment during these times, please contact me to schedule a different time to meet.

All appointments for those hours should be made at least 6 hours in advance via [riismandel.youcanbook.me](https://riismandel.youcanbook.me). I am also available to meet outside of those hours if students are unavailable during these times. Feel free to send me an email to set up a meeting if you'd like to talk or have any questions about course topics, assignments, or grades.

#### Academic dishonesty:

Students are expected to obey the NJIT honor code, and I will enforce this code to its fullest extent. The goal of this course is to evaluate your understanding of course materials and ability to express that understanding. Cheating, plagiarizing or otherwise violating the code of academic integrity not only breaks the trust between professor and student but keeps you from learning course content and improving writing and critical thinking skills. I am here to help so if you are having trouble, do not cheat, ask me for help.

For the tenets of the code or for clarification of what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please consult: <http://www.njit.edu/academics/honorcode.php>.

Generally speaking, it is a violation of the academic integrity code to:

- Use someone else's words or ideas without attribution
- Copy content from someone else's paper, quiz, or exam
- Pay for course assignments to be complete by someone else

#### Cell phones, Laptops, and Miscellaneous Technology Rules:

Though my preference is for students to have their webcams on during class, I do not require this as I know this is not necessarily feasible or comfortable for many students.

Given that class is remote, we must all do our best to stay focused on what we are working on together during class time. It is tempting to do any number of things other than listen and participate. Essentially, you are in class approximately 3 hours a week. Please be present and prepared when you are here.

#### Students Requiring Accommodations:

Students who require accommodations should contact NJIT's Student Disability Services to help procure accommodations in completing coursework. The center can be found at <http://www.njit.edu/counseling/services/disabilities.php>.

### **Course Schedule**

#### Week 1

Tuesday, January 19 - Introduction – What is a city? Why study it?

Thursday, January 21 - Lecture – Immigration, Tenements, Progressive Reform

#### Week 2 – Migration, Immigration, and the 20<sup>th</sup> Century City

Tuesday, January 26: Discussion

Primary Source

- Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, pp. Intro, Chs. 2-4, 13-14, 25, Appendix and browse the List of Illustrations choosing some to discuss

Secondary Source

- George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, Chapter 4, “Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant”

Thursday, January 28: Discussion – The Great Migration

Primary Source

- [\*The Negro Motorist Green Book\*](#)

Secondary Source

- Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*

#### Week 3 – Race, Ethnicity, and Belonging

Tuesday, February 2: Discussion – Chinatown

Primary Source

- [Library of Congress, Chinatown Photo Collection](#)

Secondary Source

- Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown*, Ch. 8, "Healthy Spaces, Healthy Conduct"

Thursday, February 4: Lecture – Sex and Gender in Urban America

#### Week 4 – Nightlife, Sex, and Leisure during Prohibition

Tuesday, February 9: Discussion

Primary Source

- [Valentine's City of New York Guide](#) (1920) – Browse and be ready to discuss specific examples from the text

Secondary Source

- George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Male Gay World 1890-1940*, Ch. 11, "'Pansies on Parade': Prohibition and the Spectacle of the Pansy"

Thursday, February 11: Lecture – Race, Housing, and Urban Renewal

#### WEEK 5 – Race, Housing, and Segregation/Urban Renewal

Tuesday, February 16: Discussion

Primary Source

- [The Baltimore Plan](#) (film - 1954)

Secondary Sources

- Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: How the Struggle over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and America*, Ch. 2

Thursday, February 18: Lecture – Suburbanization

#### Week 6 – Suburbanization

Tuesday, February 23: Discussion

Primary Source – Choose an episode from one of the following shows:

- *Leave it to Beaver*, *Father Knows Best*, *Ozzie & Harriet*

Secondary Source

- Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, Chapter 6, "Baby Boom and Birth Control: The Reproductive Consensus"

Thursday, February 25: Lecture – Car Country

#### Week 7 – Car Country/Unfair Housing

Tuesday, March 2: Discussion

Secondary Source

- Eric Avila, *Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City*, "Communities Lost and Found: The Politics of Historical Memory - Available as an ebook from NJIT library"

Thursday, March 4:

- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Home Ownership*, Ch. 2

#### Week 8 – Urban Crisis and Deindustrialization

Tuesday, March 9: Lecture – From Renewal to Crisis/Discussion

Primary Sources

- Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorder, State of New Jersey, "Report for Action," February 1968, Part III, pgs. 161-178
- Church in Metropolis, "Civil Disorders, U.S.A.: Reports and Recommendations"
- New Jersey State Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, "Press Release Response to Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorder," February 19, 1968

Thursday, March 11: Discussion

Primary Source

- [Richard Nixon, "Remarks on the Signing the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970"](#)

Secondary Source

- Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*, Ch. 8, "Crime Control as Urban Policy"

## SPRING BREAK

### Week 9 – The Wars on Drugs and Crime

Tuesday, March 23: Discussion

Secondary Source

- Kim Phillips-Fein, *Fear City: New York's Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics*, Ch. 8

Thursday, March 25: Discussion

Primary Source

- *The Warriors* (1979)

Secondary Source

- Victor Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*, Ch. 2

### Week 10 – The Wars on Drugs and Crime, cont./Fear City

Tuesday, March 30: Lecture – Los Angeles, Race, and Policing since the Watts Rebellion

Thursday, April 1: Discussion

Secondary Source

- Max Felker-Cantor, *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD*, Ch. 9

### Week 11 – Environmentalism and Eco-Justice

Tuesday, April 6: Discussion

Secondary Source

- Robert Gioielli, "Get the Lead Out: Environmental Politics in 1970s St. Louis," *Journal of Urban History*

Thursday, April 8: Discussion

Primary Source

- Flint Water Crisis Primary Sources – <https://libguides.umflint.edu/watercrisis/commentary>
- Redlining and COVID sources TBD

### Week 11 – Gentrification

Tuesday, April 13: Discussion

Primary Source

- *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (2019)

Thursday, April 15: Discussion

Secondary Source

- Nancy Raquel Mirabal, “Geographies of Displacement: Latina/os, Oral History, and The Politics of Gentrification in San Francisco’s Mission District,” *The Public Historian*

Week 13 – Diversity, Integration, and Equality

NOV. 25: Lecture – Education and Integration

Primary Source

- Selected stories from First Days Project – firstdaysproject.org

Secondary Source

- Ansley Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits*, “TBD”

Week 14 – Out in the City/ Climate Crisis

Tuesday, April 27: Discussion – Out in the City

Primary Source

- Queer Newark Oral History Project - <https://queer.newark.rutgers.edu/interviews>

Secondary Source

- Giesecking, Jen. 2013. “Queering the Meaning of ‘Neighbourhood’: Reinterpreting the Lesbian-Queer Experience of Park Slope, Brooklyn, 1983-2008.” In *Queer Presences and Absences*, edited by Yvette Taylor and Michelle Addison, 178–200

Thursday, April 29: Discussion

Secondary Source

- McPhearson, T. The Rise of Resilience: Linking Resilience and Sustainability in City Planning. *The Nature of Cities* -- <https://www.thenatureofcities.com/2014/06/08/the-rise-of-resilience-linking-resilience-and-sustainability-in-city-planning/>

Week 15 – Big Takeaways

May 4: Paper Questions/Big Takeaways

**TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE – MAY 11 BY 5PM**